

US Coast Guard trains Iraqi Marines to search freighters

Iraqi Commander lauds "tremendous gift"

(Umm Qasr, Iraq) – Since 1790 the US Coast Guard has been saving American lives and protecting the American coastline. What is not usually recognized is that the Coast Guard is active all over the world helping other nations learn to do the same work.

The Coast Guard has been working here in Iraq since 2003. During the liberation the



Coast Guard was working along the shores and ports of Iraq to help secure facilities for Iraq's future use. Since then they have been training their Iraqi counterparts as they patrol the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Recently the Coast Guard began working with the Iraqi Marines to train them on conducting searches for contraband while at sea.

The Coast Guard team has been working with the Iraqi Marines only for the past month, but they have been making enormous strides. Using standard shipping containers donated by the State Department's Iraq Reconstruction Management Organization (IRMO), the Coast Guard has created a twenty-six foot high ships superstructure. The training simulator has portholes, a bridge, rope ladders, staircases, an engine room – in short, everything the Iraqi Marines would find on a real ship at sea.

Commodore Thamir, commander of the Iraqi Marines at the Umm Qasr Naval Base,



lauded "the tremendous gift" of the search and seizure simulator by the US Coast Guard. "All of our people will now get a good idea before they go to sea, how to board a ship."

Second Class Petty Officer Dan Morales from San Antonio, Texas will be in Iraq for the next year as part of the Coast Guard's training team. "The first class was mainly officers and NCOs (non commissioned officers) – their job is to now train the others. It's a train-the-trainer." As the Iraqi officers and NCOs train their Marines, the Coast Guard is able to advise and help when needed.

"The core guys are starting to get it – it's slow, it's a trickle, but it's happening."



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